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GOVERNOR OF HAWAII



LATE
Testimony

LAURA H. THIELEN
CHAIRPERSON
BOARD OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES
COMMISSION ON WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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FIRST DEPUTY

KEN C. KAWAHARA
DEPUTY DIRECTOR - WATER

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LAND
STATE PARKS

STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

Testimony of
LAURA H. THIELEN
Chairperson

Before the House Committees on
AGRICULTURE
and
TOURISM, CULTURE, & INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Friday, March 20, 2009
11:00 AM
State Capitol, Conference Room 312

In consideration of
SENATE BILL 696, SENATE DRAFT 1
RELATING TO COQUI FROGS

Senate Bill 696, Senate Draft 1 proposes to authorize the Counties to use a portion of their share of the Transient Accommodations Tax (TAT) to conduct coqui frog eradication efforts. The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) supports funding of work on invasive species, including coqui, but recommends that it be an integrated, broad and efficient approach to address multiple species through the strategic Hawaii Invasive Species Council (HISC) process and not be limited to a single species approach. And while the Department encourages the Counties to participate in invasive species efforts including coqui, the Department, however, defers to the respective Counties regarding their fiscal priorities utilizing their share of the TAT.

The Department recognizes coqui frogs as injurious wildlife and an invasive pest. Coqui frogs are only one of several invasive species that have come to the attention of the public. The Department along with its partner departments in HISC is tasked with strategically addressing all invasive species. The Department's approach is to support funding a broad, comprehensive program of invasive species effort through the HISC, so that such control efforts can be carried out in a coordinated and strategic manner. Limiting funds to only one species will reduce the ability of HISC to address most pressing needs in a flexible and adaptable manner.